# The 4-H Professional Research Knowledge and Competencies is what makes a 4-H professional a leader in youth development.

And that's what makes 4-H a great experience for young people!

http://www.national4-Hheadquarters.gov/

Suggested citation:

National 4-H Professional Development Task Force\* (2004) New Foundations for the 4-H Youth Development Profession: 4-H Professional Research, Knowledge, and Competencies Study, 2004. National 4-H Headquarters, Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture.

\*National Professional Development Task Force: Nancy Coleman, (IA), Mary Katherine Deen (WA), Pam Garza (National Collaboration for Youth), Angela Groh (IA), Lisa Guion (FL), Angela Huebner (VA), Brent Strickland (AZ), Ryan Schmiesing (OH), Gina Taylor (WVA), Linda Jo Turner (MO), and Jennifer Zaniewski (National 4-H Council).Co-Chairs: Roger Rennekamp (KY) and Barbara Stone (National 4-H Headquarters).

Reviewed by Professional Development Subject Matter Expert Panel: Kirk Astroth (MT), Jim Barthel (WI), Lynne Borden (AZ), Dan James (TX), Claudia Mincemoyer (PA), R. Dale Safrit (NC), and Mary S. Williams (FL).



4-H Professional Research, Knowledge, and Competencies 2004 4-H professionals love to work with and for young people—learning, growing,



having fun together.

Behind every 4-H activity, opportunity, and program, and behind every 4-H educator lies an extensive body of knowledge, scholarship, and research. Since 1985, the 4-H youth development profession has relied upon a 4-H professional research and knowledge base to guide their efforts when working with and on behalf of young people.

In 2004, the most current and comprehensive research and knowledge representing the field of 4-H youth development was compiled, including the competencies that are essential to conducting 4-H youth development programs. The study resulted in the updated 4-H Professional Research, Knowledge and Competencies model (4-H PRKC, 2004) and focuses on what matters most when working with young people. Six integrated, yet distinct, areas make up the 4-H PRKC: youth development; youth program development; volunteerism; equity, access, and opportunity; partnerships; and organizational systems.

The 4-H professional research and knowledge base has guided the work of 4-H professionals for the past 20 years. The updated 4-H PRKC provides a road map for the 4-H youth development workforce both now and into the future.

The 4-H professional research, knowledge, and competencies are a key resource for:

- Students considering a career in the field of community youth development.
- Individuals entering the 4-H workforce or returning to 4-H Youth Development.
- 4-H educators and volunteers as they master the complexities of youth development work.
- 4-H program leaders determining qualifications, designing job descriptions, individual development plans, or clarifying performance standards.
- Extension specialists and multi-state teams designing staff development for 4-H educators and volunteer staff.
- Academic departments interested in building undergraduate or graduate degree specialties in youth development.
- Deans, directors, and administrators advocating for the intellectual development and scholarship associated with 4-H youth development.
- Leadership entities across the 4-H system interested in building and sustaining a strong and stable 4-H workforce and reducing the cost of hiring and turnover.
- Researchers and practitioners conducting research and evaluation efforts in 4-H Youth Development.
- Youth development organizations and agencies that are looking at quality standards of youth development for leading practices that lead to improved youth outcomes.

The updated 4-H Professional Research, Knowledge, and Competencies (4-H PRKC) uses a four-level taxonomy including Domains, Topics, Components, and Competencies. The taxonomy structure begins with the essential subject matter necessary in youth development and ends with competencies that describe the skills and behaviors people need to be effective in 4-H youth development. The six domains are:

# Youth Development

Understanding how young people learn and grow

**Topics:** Growth and Development, Youth Development Theory, and Youth

**Development Practice** 

# **Youth Program Development**

Creating quality experiences for young people

Topics: Situation Analysis, Program Design, Program

Implementation, and Program Evaluation

#### Volunteerism

Preparing volunteers to make a difference

**Topics:** Personal Readiness, Organizational Readiness,

Engagement of Volunteers, Education of Volunteers, and Sustainability of Volunteer

**Efforts** 

## Equity, Access, and Opportunity

Ensuring that each young person has a chance to succeed

**Topics:** Sensitivity, Awareness, Communication, Relevant

Programming, and Inclusive Organizations

### **Partnerships**

Uniting young people and adults for stronger communities

**Topics:** Youth-Adult Partnerships, Youth Action,

Organizational Alliances, and Community Development

## **Organizational Systems**

Connecting people and priorities for the greatest impact

**Topics:** Organizational Effectiveness, Personal Effectiveness,

Communication Strategies, Resource Development & Management,

Risk Management, and Professionalism

